

ZION'S CALL

City of Zion Church

"A City set on a hill...giving light to everyone!"

PASTOR'S CORNER: *WHY AM I HERE?*

Have you ever asked yourself the question, "Why am I here?" I am particularly mindful of this piercing question because of the recent media-driven retrospection taking place as we approach the New Year. As I watch television and read newspapers, I have noticed that we are being bombarded with "year-in-review" type articles and news reports. This type of journalism and reporting often causes many of us to think introspectively, and begin to take inventory of our lives. While for the general public this appears to be a productive project, this can be an especially profitable endeavor for Believers.



When asking ourselves this challenging question, we must first remember that we are not qualified to answer because PURPOSE can only be discovered in the mind of the CREATOR. When an inventor sits down to create an invention or a product, he already has in mind the purpose for the product. The "WHY" always precedes the "WHAT." Whenever we don't understand WHY a thing exists, we proceed to use it for purposes which it was not intended. This is called ABNORMAL USE or ABUSE. The condition of not knowing purpose has been the source of great pain for many of us in many various aspects of our lives (i.e. family relationships, careers, finances, etc).

The Bible however, teaches that we were all CREATED by the great CREATOR of all things. Colossians 1:15-16 (NIV) records that "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn (Jesus) over all creation. For by Him all things were created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by Him and for Him." This passage identifies Jesus Christ as Co-Creator with God the Father.

When the Apostle Paul arrived in Athens on one of his missionary journeys, he discovered a city full of idols, with people worshipping many DIFFERENT gods. Isn't it interesting how there is "nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9 NIV). Men and women TODAY, still worship different gods other than the Lord Jesus Christ. After observing this for some time, the Apostle Paul was divinely inspired to correct this error saying, "From one man (Adam) He made every nation of men...and He determined the times set for

them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would SEEK HIM and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him...In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but NOW He commands all people to REPENT" (Acts 17:16-34 NIV).

These texts help to answer the "WHY" question. You and I were created for Jesus Christ. Revelation 4:11 (KJV) furthermore states, "Thou are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and FOR THY PLEASURE they are and were created." You and I were created to SERVE and PLEASE King Jesus. Just like a husband's and wife's goal is to please each other (I Corinthians 7:32-35), the Church who is the Bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:22-33), seeks to do the same. This is the goal of every MATURE BELIEVER, because we understand "that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ" (II Corinthians 5:9-10 NIV).

While these passages of Scripture speak to the GENERAL purpose of man, they do not address the SPECIFIC vision or plan that God has for each of our lives. For this answer, further work and investigation is necessary. Nothing that is of true value comes easily; yet, there is great satisfaction, joy, fulfillment, and reward found in living in and achieving one's God-given purpose. As the Apostle Paul approached the end of his life and ministry, he remarked that "I have fought a good fight, I have finished MY COURSE, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a CROWN of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day" (II Timothy 4:7-8 KJV).

I invite you to join City of Zion Church in our annual PowerFast (see PowerFast article on page 2), as we seek the Lord for His direction and vision for each of our lives. This PowerFast is our corporate time of revival and refreshing. It is a time when we turn our plates down, turn our faces to the wall, and look to God for great things (Matthew 6:16-18). Don't be like a ship without a sail in 2009. Be purposeful and deliberate in 2009, and join City of Zion Church as we start the year out "walking by faith," and launching out into the deep waters.

"They saw the works of the Lord, His wonderful deeds in the deep" (Psalms 107:24 NIV).

*Be Encouraged,
Pastor Gregory Strong*

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

There is something about the beginning of a new year that causes us to have a **renewed** sense of hope and expectation. But, why is this so? What makes the upcoming year so different from the previous one? Why does weight loss seem more attainable? Why is the financial breakthrough now feasible? Why does our faith in God seem to increase at the beginning of a new year?

As Christians, we should always remember that our hope is in Christ Jesus and in His will for our lives. Our hope should not be in what appears as a good season of opportunity. We must know that the same level of faith and hope that we exercise at the beginning of the year, will be required to carry us throughout the remainder of the calendar months. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the **renewing** of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (*Romans 12:2, NIV*).

The calendar year has no control over the timing of circumstances that God will allow into our lives. We have to remember that whether in January, May, or December, God remains the same yesterday, today, and forevermore. "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being **renewed** day by day." (2 Corinthians 4:16, NIV).

As we set goals that we hope to achieve over the next 12 calendar months, let us also make the decision to remain faithful to God, no matter what the outcome may be, or the challenges we may face. When things look bleak, remember that God is not waiting for the start of another calendar year to bless us. It is up to us to remain faithful, and to serve Him, no matter what time of year, or what may be going on in our lives. And it is this consistent faith, that will outweigh any other measured goals we have set for ourselves throughout the year. In this, our Father will be pleased.

—Sister Clivette Jones—

WELCOMING 2009 WITH CITY OF ZION'S 21 DAY CORPORATE POWERFAST

On Thursday January 1, 2009, the City of Zion Church will begin its Annual 21-day Corporate PowerFast. We are fasting beginning on January 1st because New Year's Day is a great opportunity for CON-SECRATION unto the Lord Jesus Christ. During the PowerFast, we will turn from our regular routines and give our attention to God through a season of prayer, meditation, and fasting.

Mature Christians understand that "our times are in God's hands" (Psalms 31:15). Many of us have been praying about different issues like family, health, and finances. Others are seeking God for direction in life and are waiting for the VISION God has already given them to come to pass. Fasting is a tool that God has given His children to use to gain access to all of these REWARDS (Matthew 6:16-18).

The Bible contains about 92 passages mentioning fasting. Many heroes of the faith including Moses, Esther, Nehemiah, Daniel, and Paul fasted at crucial times in their lives. Jesus also taught and modeled, and encouraged His followers to fast (Matthew 4:1-11).

During the PowerFast, you are encouraged to increase your time and frequency of PRAYER. Prayer and Fasting work hand in hand. Prayer is one of the great Christian disciplines that are often a casualty of the hustle and bustle of our busy lifestyles. Jesus taught and modeled for His followers that we should ALWAYS PRAY (Luke 18:1). The PowerFast is a great opportunity for many of us to revisit and shore up our prayer lives.

In his book "The Maker's Diet," Dr. Jordan S. Rubin writes that fasting is to the body what rebooting is to a personal computer. "Many seemingly serious problems with a computer can be fixed by simply turning it off." Dr. Rubin also writes, "Likewise, the body heals itself while it fasts – it undergoes an important regeneration process during our break from eating."

"But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you." — Matthew 6: 17-18, NIV

City of Zion's PowerFast is also designed to expose God's people to healthier lifestyle choices – those that will help us feel better, live longer, and become more effective servants for Jesus Christ. It is God's will that "you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well" (3 John 1:2 NIV).

City of Zion's PowerFast is a great time to eliminate addictive habits like smoking, drinking, and the consumption of other mood-altering substances (including caffeine). If you have been unsuccessfully trying to lose weight, this is a great time to TRY AGAIN. Remember that you and I can "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13 KJV).

Everyone can participate in City of Zion's PowerFast but, please consult your doctor before you join us in the PowerFast if you have chronic illnesses, heart or liver disease, take insulin for diabetes, are pregnant or nursing, or suffer from anemia.

COZ POWERFAST INSTRUCTIONS	
Week 1 (Jan 1-7)	No Meat, Poultry, Eggs or Fish Products.
Week 2 (Jan 8-14)	No Dairy Products (i.e. milk, butter, cheese, yogurt, ice cream, dairy dressings).
Week 3 (Jan 15-21)	No Grain, Bread, Rice (i.e. oatmeal, cereals, crackers, popcorn, noodles, pastas).
All 21 days (Jan 1-21)	Eliminate all fried foods, sodas, caffeine, and sugary sweets (i.e. candy, cakes, pastries, chocolate, donuts and cookies).
All 21 days (Jan 1-21)	Add to your diet healthy alternatives like: fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, 100% juices (vegetable and fruit) and herbal teas, pretzels, nut butters such as almond, peanut and cashew.

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CITY OF ZION'S 21 DAY CORPORATE POWERFAST (CONT'D)

During weeks 2 and 3 of the PowerFast when we resume eating meat, you are encouraged to eat only lean meats that are baked, broiled or grilled. During the PowerFast, it is also recommended that you increase water consumption to at least 8 to 10 glasses a day.

On each day of the PowerFast, meditate on the chapter of Proverbs that corresponds with the given day. For example, on January 1st we will meditate on the 1st chapter of Proverbs; on January 5th

we will meditate on the 5th chapter of Proverbs.

Be careful not to boast about your participation in the PowerFast. This is a very personal and spiritual undertaking that should not be used as an occasion to gain glory for one's self. Remember the Words of Jesus when He said "when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that it will not be obvious to men that you are fasting, but only to your Father, who is unseen; and your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you" (Matthew 6:17-18 NIV).

HEALTH CORNER: SAMPLE MEAL PLAN DURING CITY OF ZION'S POWERFAST

WEEK	BREAKFAST	LUNCH	SNACK 1	DINNER	SNACK 2
1	2 Tbsp peanut butter; 1 apple	Tomato stew with wild rice and beans	Edamame with dried cranberries	Bar-B-Q tofu on wheat tortilla	Fat-free, low-sodium popcorn
2	3 turkey sausages; 1 cup oats	Chicken breast with corn and spinach	1 Pear or 5 carrots and 5 celery stalks with hummus	Meatloaf; greens; wheat roll	Pomegranate and kiwi
3	Tomato, spinach omelette (made with egg beaters)	Salmon or roast beef with roasted peppers or tomatoes	20 Almonds and a cup of green tea	Turkey breast with peas and pearled onions	1 cup fat-free, reduced sugar yogurt

SOME USEFUL TIPS:

- Eat every 3 hours and snack between meals to avoid over-eating.
- Pack your lunch to avoid the temptation of unhealthy fast food choices.
- Exercise in short bouts during the day (if you're schedule permits).
- Drink lots of water to maintain hydration.
- Join City of Zion Women's "My Body, God's Temple" exercise class.

- Do some form of cardiovascular exercise(s) at least 3 times a week for 30 min or more (i.e. bike, aerobics, or jogging).
- Attempt weight bearing exercises at least 3 times a week for 30 min. or more (i.e. dumbbells or pushups).
- Do not skip meals. Skipping meals will lead to weight gain and a slower metabolism.

For more information about fitness, please contact Sister Mia Speight.

FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY IS COMING TO CITY OF ZION CHURCH

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jeremiah 29:11, NIV).

Financial Peace University (FPU) is a 13 week program that encourages Biblical principles in the area of finances. The program was created by Dave Ramsey, a personal money management expert, and is designed to teach you and your family how to get out of debt, stay out of debt, and to build wealth. You will have fun as you learn about saving, budgeting, investing, insurance options, and much more.

Exercising their gift of helping others and using the training they have received, City of Zion (COZ) disciples Jim and Betty Watson, will facilitate the FPU program at COZ.

FPU will begin on Monday, January 12, 2009 from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm at City of Zion church, 14100 Laurel Park Drive, Laurel, MD, 20707. Classes will be held every Monday for 13 weeks. Each week, you will meet with your class to watch a DVD lesson, and to participate in discussions and accountability groups that will change

your attitude about money. The result will be a total money makeover in your personal finances.

To participate in FPU classes, you will need a FPU lifetime family membership kit which comes with class materials. You can purchase the kit from Jim and Betty Watson (at least two weeks prior to class start date with cash only), or online at <http://www.daveramsey.com/fpu/home/>. The cost of the kit is \$99.95.

There will be an informational preview on Saturday, January 10, 2009 at 11:30 am, at City of Zion church. The preview will be a 25 to 30 minute DVD presentation that describes FPU in detail. FPU is open to COZ disciples and guests.

For more information, or to sign up for FPU, please contact Jim and Betty Watson at 301-792-7639, or visit COZ's website, www.CityofZionLaurel.org.

"A good man leaves an inheritance for his children's children" (Proverbs 13:22(a), NIV).

MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP (WIP) 3RD ANNUAL HEALTH AND BEAUTY SPA

On Saturday, November 8, 2008, from 8:00am – 4:00pm, a host of women (disciples and guests), gathered at City of Zion church (COZ) for our Women's Fellowship, "Women In Pursuit" (WIP) third annual Health and Beauty Spa: "Women in Pursuit of Health, Beauty, and Glorifying God." Under the leadership of Lady Mineva Strong, COZ's annual Health and Beauty Spa is designed to edify, encourage, and equip women to live lives as reflections of the women God has called them to be. Presented by COZ disciples, this year's program included five main sessions that included information regarding Diabetes, Uterine Fibroids, Hair Care, and Understanding the Beauty of Our Creation.



City of Zion's dance ministry ministered in dance to a song that correlated the theme of the day. We also received a very inspiring rendition of WIP's theme song, "God's Woman," by Sister Detra Battle. The program ended with a fashion show of "Sunday Best" attire (organized by Sister Melissa Pryce), an opportunity to receive a preliminary health screening by a registered nurse (Sister Debra Broyles), optional participation in an exercise/fitness class led by a certified personal trainer (Sister Mia Speight), and opportunities to shop various vendor booths.



The first session, "Women's Health: Diabetes," was presented by Sister Renee' Coates, PT, DPT. In this session, we learned about the different types of diabetes, the clinical signs and symptoms of untreated or uncontrolled diabetes mellitus, early warning signs, preventative measures, complications, and ways to control/manage glucose levels for those who are insulin dependent. Although the different types of diabetes were reviewed, much of this presentation focused on Insulin Dependent Diabetes Mellitus (IDDM), also referred to as "Type 2 Diabetes." Sister Renee' also provided detailed instructions on searching the Internet to access reliable information, and evidence-based research articles about diabetes.

The second session, "Women's Health: Uterine Fibroid Tumors," was presented by Sister Debra B. Broyles, RN, BSN, CNOR. Sister Debra provided us with an overview of uterine fibroid tumors, along with a description of the three types of fibroid tumor that can occur. This presentation also discussed complications that are caused by fibroids, such as heavy bleeding during menstruation, infertility, and miscarriages. In addition, Sister Debra gave a brief summary of options that are available for safe and effective treatment of fibroid related symptoms, including medications that may shrink fibroids.

The third session of the day: "Understanding the Beauty of Our Creation, Part I," was presented by Sister Clivette Jones, MSM/MBA. In this session, we were provided with an in-depth look at the standards society has used to influence the definition of women that are contrary to the way our Creator has defined us. We were challenged to glorify God in all we do, thanking Him for the way He has created us; instead of seeking to obtain the approval of man by tampering with God's work. During this presentation, three women were selected to 'create' something using their individual preferences. Each woman was given a basket containing similar items (a clear jar, sand of differing

colors, measuring cups, pebbles of differing colors, and a stir), and was asked to create something in the jar, using those items. Although each woman's basket contained the same items, each person's 'creation' was very different, yet highly valued in their own eyes. This visual reminded us that although we may look and act differently, the truth is that God has created us with the same elements, and we are all of great value in His eyes.



The fourth session, "Understanding the Beauty of Our Creation, Part II," was presented by Deaconess LaKisha Edwards. In this session, women were reminded that they are created beautiful by God's definition, and that the beauty of the female creation lies in fulfilling our primary role of giving God glory in all we do. Sister LaKisha also reminded us that this cannot be achieved without proper connection to the right source, Jesus Christ. Using the story of Martha and Mary in Luke 10: 38-42, Sister LaKisha discussed in contrast, the characteristics of these two women of God. Martha, who was merely accessible to Jesus, was distracted, upset, and worried about many things—even in His presence. And Mary, who was available to the Savior, sat at His feet, and was focused. Yet, she left the work behind, to do the one thing that needed to be done, and could not be taken away. Like Mary, the participants of the Health and Beauty Spa were encouraged to affirm that women must abide in Jesus, and allow Him to abide in them. "For apart from Jesus Christ, we can do nothing."



"Hair Care 101" was presented by Deaconess (in-training) Davina Cook, Licensed Cosmetologist. In this session, we learned a detailed definition of hair types and the importance of protecting our hair from elements such as heat, cold, and injury. We received a demonstration of a hair strand test for assessing health and elasticity of our hair. We learned of the most common ways that hair can become damaged, either by nature or improper care. Sister Davina also shared with us, the importance of shampooing and conditioning. Information about proper care was provided for both natural and chemically processed hair. Sister Davina also provided us with tips for understanding the services being provided in a hair salon, and important questions that should always be asked of a hair care technician. This session ended with suggestions, and a demonstration of quick, simple, and easy hair styles.

In closing, Lady Mineva shared a few words of encouragement, and her appreciation to Pastor Strong, the Health and Beauty Spa planning committee, presenters, participants, fashion show models, vendors, Dress Barn clothing in Laurel, MD, and Sister Jacqueline Alston (for items used in the fashion show), COZ's Dance, Audio, and Culinary ministries, and to everyone who contributed to the success of the program. City of Zion's Women's Fellowship: "Women in Pursuit" (WIP) meets every 2nd Saturday from 9am to 11am at the City of Zion Church, 14100 Laurel Park Drive, Laurel, MD. For more information regarding WIP, please contact Lady Mineva Strong.



MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT (CONT'D)

CITY OF ZION'S PRISON MINISTRIES AT DETENTION CENTERS

WOMEN'S PRISON MINISTRY — THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION AND HOLIDAY VISIT AT THOMAS J. S. WAXTER CHILDREN'S CENTER

On Saturday, November 22, 2008, City of Zion's Women's Prison ministry participated in the annual "Harvestfest" at Thomas J. S. Waxter Children's Center in Laurel (Waxter's). It was an opportunity for the young women at Waxter's to enjoy a Thanksgiving celebration among family, friends, employees of Waxter's, and volunteers from various churches who minister to these young women monthly. This year's celebration and worship was one of power and excellence. God moved in a tremendous way!

City of Zion's Praise and Worship team opened the program in song, and the Daughters of Zion dance ministry ministered in dance. The Holy Spirit ministered to the girls who are residents of the facility, as well as all who were in attendance for the celebration. In previous years, Harvestfests at Waxter's have been wonderful. However, the number of volunteers in attendance for this year's celebration far exceeded the number of young girls at the facility. There were more volunteers than there were girls! This was just another example of the undeniable power and move of God. There were a number of young girls who came to Christ that night. Lives were touched, children were brought home to Christ, and the bondage of Satan was broken.

On Tuesday, December 16, 2008, City of Zion's Women's Prison ministry also celebrated the Christmas Holidays with a special visit to the young girls at Waxter's. Each girl received words of encouragement, and a gift bag with slippers, socks, daily bread, and other toiletries. City of Zion's Women's Prison ministry visits Waxter's Children's Center every 1st and 3rd Tuesday from 7pm—8pm.

MEN'S PRISON MINISTRY — THANKSGIVING CELEBRATION AT OAKHILL DETENTION CENTER

On Thanksgiving Day, (November 27, 2008), City of Zion's Men's Prison ministry participated in a special Thanksgiving service at Oakhill Detention Center in Laurel. A total of eighteen men from City of Zion participated in this service, and some men shared their personal testimonies (about previously being incarcerated) with the boys at Oakhill. Our Prison ministry extends our mission of reaching the "unsaved and unchurched" for Jesus Christ beyond our church doors. We continue to pray for those in detention centers as we seek to build relationships with them, and introduce those who are lost to Jesus Christ. City of Zion's Men's Prison ministry visits Oakhill Detention Center every 1st and 3rd Monday from 7pm—8pm.

For more information, or to join City of Zion's Women's or Men's Prison ministry, please contact Deacon (in-training) Dwight Cook.

HOSPITALITY MINISTRY — HARVESTFEST AND HONOR ROLL STUDENTS



On Friday, October 31, 2008, as the world participated in Halloween events, City of Zion hosted its 4th annual HarvestFest. Children and adults celebrated each other and highlighted the fact that the Lord takes pleasure in His people. Harvest events included the three legged race, potato sack race, face painting, football toss, a variety of arts and crafts, and more. A myriad of gifts and prizes were available for all participants. The grand finale consisted of an annual COZ costume parade, featuring non-scary costumes. This was truly an evening of food, fun, festivities and thanksgiving for all.



On Sunday, December 14, 2008, the Hospitality ministry presented Certificates of Achievement to students who made the Honor Roll during the first quarter of the 2008-2009 school year. The following students were honored: **Elementary School:** Jacqueline Alston; Jae'El Edwards; Devin Garrett; Jewell M. Hill; Jauvenel Leveille, Jr.; Naomi Leveille; Stephanie Leveille; Armon J. Nettey; Vashitii J. Strong; Zoëi F. Strong; D'mani Washington; D'naja Washington. **Middle School:** Rachael Wood. **High School:** Jaleel Dyson; Nicole Hawkins; Alexis O. White. The Hospitality ministry looks forward to honoring more students for the second quarter of the school year.

EVANGELISM MINISTRY—WAY OF THE MASTER WORKSHOP

The Evangelism ministry will begin a new 'Way of the Master' Evangelism Workshop in February 2009. The "Way of the Master" workshop is an eight week training that prepares and equips disciples to effectively share their faith. Workshops are held weekly on Friday evenings. If you're interested in learning how to win souls for Christ, and to share your faith biblically and effectively—come, taste, and see what the Lord has in store for you. *For more information, or to sign up, please contact Minister Don Watson.*

LIVING FREE MINISTRY— HOLIDAY CELEBRATION



On Saturday, December 20, 2008, the men of City of Zion's Living Free ministry celebrated the Christmas season with food and fellowship at the City of Zion church. Under the leadership of Deacon (in-training) Julius Thompson, Living Free is a small group ministry that encourages men who have struggled with drug addiction. By utilizing the Turning Point model of small group ministry, this group provides support, discipleship, and compassionate accountability to men who want to be "Free Indeed" (John 8:36). *For more information, or to join the Living Free ministry, please contact Deacon (in-training) Julius Thompson.*



MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT (CONT'D)

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS — CITY OF ZION'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CANTATA



On Sunday, December 21, 2008, City of Zion's music ministry (band, choirs, praise team, and dance ministry) presented its 4th annual Christmas Cantata. The Cantata was held at the Holiday Inn Laurel-West, in Laurel, MD. It was truly a blessing. City of Zion disciples and guests enjoyed a time of Praise and Worship through musical arrangements, song, dance, and narrations. The theme for this year's presentation was "Bow Down and Worship Him," based on Matthew 2: 10 – 12, which reads: "When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshipped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route." We praise God for another opportunity to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ in excellence.



CITY OF ZION CHURCH ANNUAL CHRISTMAS FELLOWSHIP



On Wednesday, December 17, 2008, City of Zion church celebrated Christmas with its annual Christmas fellowship. Pastor Strong shared a few words of encouragement with disciples and guests. We were all reminded of the true meaning of Christmas, and strongly encouraged to focus on celebrating Christ, rather than incurring unnecessary expenses — including credit card debt. We enjoyed good food, fun, and fellowship with each other.



As an annual tradition, each child also received a keepsake photo taken with Santa Claus.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM LISA HALL IN BANGKOK, THAILAND

City of Zion continues to support our disciple Lisa Hall, who is currently serving (a five year commitment) as a missionary in Bangkok, Thailand. Lisa sends her greetings, and wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Since returning to Bangkok in July 2008, Lisa went to an English speaking service for the first time on Christmas Eve (December 24, 2008), and felt refreshed. "Although it wasn't City of Zion," she notes, she enjoyed the service. As we approach the New Year, Lisa prays that "we will all take time to reflect on the many blessings, and how God has brought us through many trials this past year. And, that in 2009, He will challenge us, and take us to another level in Him." (Lisa expects to visit us some time this year when she takes a four to six month furlough, then return to Bangkok for the remaining time of her commitment). *Pictured below are a few photos from Lisa.*



Lisa Hall and members of her Missionary team



Community Evangelistic program in Bangkok



Photos from Children's Church in Bangkok



Please continue to pray for Lisa and her team, as they share God's Word to those less fortunate than us, in the slums of Bangkok, Thailand.



DISCIPLE SPOTLIGHT: SISTER KIMBERLEY SLOAN WATSON

Kimberley Sloan Watson (Kim) was born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is the youngest of three children, and has one brother, and one sister. Kim appears to be bold, confident, strong in persona, and well put together. Although she admits that she tends to play things strictly by the book, Kim believes that her “exterior persona” is misleading. According to Kim, in fact, she likes to relax, laugh, and have fun. Because she is aware of the fact that she is nothing without Christ, she believes that she is probably less confident in herself than she appears—her confidence lies in Christ.

Kim was raised in the Corinthian Baptist Church, in Cincinnati, Ohio. This is still her family’s church, and the same church in which her mother was raised. Kim was baptized at age 10, during a sunrise Easter morning service. She enjoyed, and was very active in church activities as a child. She attended Sunday school classes regularly, and she sang and directed the youth choir.

Upon graduation from High school, Kim pursued an undergraduate degree in psychology at Thomas More College in Kentucky. After taking her first psychology course at Thomas More, she enjoyed it so much, that she thought she had “died and went to heaven.” Immediately, she knew she had a passion for helping others through psychology, and that became her professional pursuit for years to follow. In 1981, after graduating from Thomas More College with honors, Kim received a full academic scholarship to the graduate school of Vanderbilt University, where she later earned a Masters of Science degree in Statistics, and a Doctorate in School Psychology. Towards the end of her

doctoral program, Kim moved to the Washington, DC area to complete a doctoral internship with the Montgomery County Public school system (MCPS). In 1989, she earned her PhD in School Psychology, and continued employment with MCPS as a school psychologist. Kim is still employed by MCPS today.



Kim has worked with preschool-aged children (i.e., from birth to five years of age) from 1987 until 2007, and she began working with school-aged children (i.e., those in kindergarten through grade 12) in 2007.

Kim finds great fulfillment in her job as a school psychologist. She serves as a liaison between the school system and parents, and she is responsible for identifying, assessing, and ensuring that the educational needs of children are being met. Kim serves children with and without special education needs. Although she liaises with the school system and parents, Kim stresses the fact that “the children are her clients,” and she places priority on making sure that their needs are met.

During her elementary school years, Kim was regularly dismissed from class to the principal’s office because of her “quick verbal responses”, which were not always viewed as being appropriate or polite.

These incidents she said, “were mis-understood requests for clarification.” By the time she was enrolled in college however, she learned to better express her requests, and instead of appearing impolite, these “quick verbal responses” became a vehicle for challenging her professors for clarity and a better understanding of topics. The success of this approach was reflected in her grades, as she received mostly A’s, and her grades were used as a guide for grading curves in all her classes.

In her spare time, Kim loves to roller-skate, and to spend time with her husband, Minister Don Watson. She describes her (eight/almost nine) years of marriage, as being filled with lots of fun. “Because we share a strong faith in Jesus Christ,” she said, “even in the bad times, it’s fun.” “There is great joy in realizing that even after challenges and rough times, we can still love each other.” Kim also noted appreciation for her husband’s confidence. “He is never intimidated.” “He supports me when I’m right, but does not hesitate to tell me when I’m wrong.” “He has also stretched me spiritually—encouraging me to do things I would never have done.” “He is a true man of God, and I am blessed to have him in my life.”

Kim’s parents were married for 52 years until her father, Edward Sloan deceased in 2002. Her mother, Delilah Sloan, along with her siblings, still reside in Ohio. Kim currently lives in Laurel, MD with her husband, Minister Don Watson. They have two daughters, Deanna and Tina. Kim is a deaconess at City of Zion church, she serves on the New Members and Evangelism ministries, teaches a Wednesday night Bible class, and she leads a weekly Women’s Bible study on Saturday mornings. —Interview written by Sister Clivette Jones—

CITY OF ZION YOUTH, JACQUELINE ALSTON REPRESENTS SCHOOL AT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

City of Zion disciple, Jacqueline L. Alston (Jackie) is a 6th Grade Honor student at KIPP DC, a public charter school in Southeast Washington, DC. At the beginning of the 2008-2009 school year, Jackie was selected to represent her school at the “2008 Student Leadership Conference” in Wisconsin, Oct-9-12, 2008. Jackie was among 100 students from different states that were chosen to collaborate and share ideas on ways to better their respective local schools and community. Jackie’s mother and COZ disciple, Jacqueline Alston, says she is described by her teachers as “an exemplary leader at KIPP DC School.”



During the weekend retreat, students participated in both physical and mental (educational) challenges. Jackie states that while her school does much to develop a students' character and leadership skills, students need to take on a bigger role in making sure everyone's attitude reflects the school's motto of "Work Hard. Be Nice." She continued to share that her vision is to start a "leadership council" at her school, where she hopes to discuss and enforce goodness and integrity. She hopes to encourage integrity in her friends and classmates, and not to gain personal attention. As a result of this initiative, Jackie along with one of her teachers, have developed a proposal for a student leadership council, which was submitted to Richard Barth, the CEO of KIPP. The proposal was approved, and it birthed the first “student leadership council” at any of the KIPP DC public charter schools. In addition, this proposal, and Jackie’s vision, is now being reviewed at other KIPP public charter schools across the states. At COZ, Jackie serves on the Children’s Choir and Power with a Purpose (youth) Dance ministry.

COZ disciples John and Jacqueline Alston are the parents of Jackie Alston.

City of Zion Church
"A City set on a hill...giving light to everyone!"



14100 Laurel Park Drive
Laurel, Maryland 20707
301.490.7660 (Phone)
301.490.1500 (Fax)
Elder Gregory O. Strong,
Pastor

www.CityofZionLaurel.org

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

COZ Annual PowerFast,
January 1—January 21

New Year's Revival,
January 7—9

Sanctity of Human Life
Sunday, January 25

COZ Leadership Summit,
January 29—31

4th Annual Valentine's
Gala, February 14

Spiritual Gifts Inventory,
February 22

Easter Sunday, April 12

Mother's Day, May 10

Father's Day, June 15

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW YEAR'S REVIVAL 2009

On January 7—9, 2008 (Wednesday — Friday), the 2009 New Year's Revival services will be held at First Baptist Church of Glenarden Worship Center in Upper Marlboro, MD. Services will begin at 7:00 PM. Doors open at 6:00 PM.

4TH ANNUAL VALENTINE'S GALA

City of Zion's Couple's Fellowship will host its 4th Annual Valentine's Gala on Saturday, February 14, 2009. The Gala will be held at the Holiday Inn Laurel-West, 15101 Swietzer Lane, Laurel, MD 20709, from 6:00 pm—9:00 pm. Our Valentine's Gala is open to married and engaged couples. Register early and take advantage of a discounted rate. Discounted early-bird registration will take place January 4 — February 1, 2009. The cost for the Gala is \$50.00 per couple. After that, the fee will increase to \$60.00. Couples who are not disciples of City of Zion Church are welcome to attend. The Valentine's Gala promises to be an evening of romancing, dancing, and celebrating God's gift of marriage. For more information or to register, please contact Sister Antoinette Hawkins.

NEW DISCIPLES CLASS AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS INVENTORY

New Disciples classes are held the second Sunday of each month at 9:00 am.

Disciples of City of Zion Church are strongly encouraged to complete a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. The Spiritual Gifts Inventory is offered once every four months. This inventory not only identifies your spiritual gift(s), but also helps you determine a ministry area that aligns with your spiritual gift(s). The next Spiritual Gifts Inventory will be administered on Sunday, February 22, at 8:30 am. Please contact Deaconess Kim Watson or Sister Debbie Broyles for information.

VISITATION MINISTRY

City of Zion's Visitation ministry visits Mariner Health of Greater Laurel at 14200 Laurel Park Drive, Laurel, Md., the third Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. The ministry visits the Cherry Lane Nursing Center at 9001 Cherry Lane, Laurel, Md., the fourth Sunday of each month from 3:00 to 4:00 pm. For more information or to join the Visitation ministry, please contact Sister Marla Woodfolk.

ANNUAL BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN WITH THE LAUREL PREGNANCY CENTER

City of Zion continues to support the Laurel Pregnancy Center (LPC) through volunteers, prayers, material assistance (enfamil, baby formula, pampers, new baby clothing), and financial contributions — including their annual Baby Bottle campaign. The next Baby Bottle campaign at City of Zion will begin in January 2009. We will be hearing from LPC Director, Mrs. Andrea Capuyan, as we launch our Baby Bottle campaign on Sunday, January 25. During this time, disciples are provided with empty baby bottles, and are asked to fill the bottles with spare change. Bottles are collected as filled, and prior to the end of the campaign.

In 2008, City of Zion donated a total of \$1,225.15 to LPC; \$725.15 of which was raised from the 2008 Baby Bottle campaign.

SHARE FOOD NETWORK

City of Zion is happy to announce its partnership with the SHARE Food Network. SHARE is a nonprofit food buying club that offers good, nutritious products at reduced cost. Through this program, you can save up to 30-50% on many of the same products you would find in a supermarket. Packages include a wide variety of frozen meats, fresh produce, and other grocery items. The cost per package is \$19.00 (total value up to \$45.00). COZ will accept and distribute orders once per month. Payments (\$19.00 per package) must be made at the time of placing an order, in **cash only**. You do not have to be a disciple of City of Zion Church to participate in the Share Program. For more information, please contact Sister Lauryn Baytop or Minister Sheila Thompson.

CITY OF ZION BOOKSTORE

Please visit our bookstore during the hours of 5:30 to 6:45 pm every Wednesday, and immediately following Worship Service every Sunday. Items include CD's (pre-ordered with payment), Bibles, books, ink pens, shirts, and more. Special orders are also available.

For questions or inquiries about in-stock items, please contact Sister Antoinette Hawkins. You may also forward your inquiries to her by email at antnhwk@aol.com.